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China

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I. Methodology, consultation process and background

A. Methodology and consultation process (recommendations 35 and 61)

1. The present report was compiled on the basis of the general guidelines for the preparation of information under the universal periodic review, as set forth in Human Rights Council decision 17/119. It highlights progress in human rights in the mainland of China and the Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions (SARs) since 2013, the implementation of recommendations received at the time of the second-cycle review, and challenges and future goals. In accordance with the "One Country, Two Systems" principle, the reports separately prepared by the governments of the Hong Kong and Macao SARs of China are presented in chapters V and VI below.

2. To compile the present report, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs headed up a special interdepartmental working group comprising nearly 30 legislative, judicial and administrative organs of the Government (see list in annex I). It convened numerous coordination meetings, carefully studied United Nations norms, and drew on the best practices of many countries to identify and define the ideas, frameworks, modalities and content to be used in preparing the report. Using this basis to collaborate on the drafting of the text, the team members revised and refined the report dozens of times. Nearly 40 non-governmental organizations and academic institutions were also consulted, orally and in writing (see list in annex II), and public opinion was broadly solicited via the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for further modification and finalization.

B. Follow-up to the second-cycle review

3. The Chinese Government accepted 204 of the 252 recommendations put forward by various countries in the course of the second-cycle universal periodic review. Following completion of the review, and reflecting the great importance China attaches to carrying through with follow-up work, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs set up a working group on the implementation of those recommendations, and distributed the report of the United Nations Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review to the government departments concerned. The Ministry working group convened numerous meetings, clearly defined the tasks of each department, researched and drafted specific implementation plans, and provided regular reports and clarifications of the implementation as it progressed. As it drafted and implemented the Second National Human Rights Action Plan of China (2012–2015), issued the Third National Human Rights Action Plan of China, identified the goals and tasks for respecting, protecting and promoting human rights for the 2016–2020 period, and carried out the midterm assessment beginning in 2018, the Government actively integrated the review's recommendations into national legislation, administrative regulations and planning in various areas of economic and social development. The process and results of implementing the relevant recommendations of the second-cycle review are reflected in the present report.

C. The concept and theoretical system of human rights with Chinese characteristics

4. There is no universal road for the development of human rights in the world. As an important element in the economic and social development of each country, the cause of human rights must be promoted on the basis of the national conditions and the needs of the people of that country, and cannot be defined on the basis of a single authority. Guided by Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, China attaches great importance to the promotion and protection of human rights, ever acting as an advocate, practitioner and promoter of the cause of protecting human rights and always following the road of developing human rights with Chinese characteristics.

5. This is a road that takes national conditions as the foundation. In China, the road of human rights development is rooted in a cultural tradition that is more than five thousand years old. In modern times, it derives from more than 170 years of arduous searching, and owes its success to the great practice established by New China over the past 69 years, and particularly the past 40 years of reform and opening up. China gives due regard to both the universality and the particularity of human rights, combines promotion of democracy and people's livelihood, coordinates the pursuit of peace and development, and promotes and protects human rights in the process of development. It has written a historic chapter of human rights progress and broadened the practical programme for international human rights protections.

6. This is a road that takes the people as the centre. In China, the road of human rights development always takes the well-being and interests of the people as the starting point and end result. As it upholds the principle of the people's sovereignty, China is developing socialist consultative democracy, perfecting the democratic system, enriching democratic forms and broadening democratic channels. As it upholds the principle of the people's primacy, China is enhancing the people's well-being and promoting the comprehensive development and common prosperity of the people as a whole. China has built the largest educational, social-security and grass-roots democratic electoral systems in the world, thereby affording unprecedented protections for the rights and interests of the people.

7. This is a road that takes development as the priority. China has unswervingly implemented the concept of innovative, coordinated, green, open and shared development, steadily increasing its economic strength; its gross domestic product has increased from 54 trillion to 82.7 trillion yuan in the past five years. China has conscientiously implemented the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, ensured adequate food and clothing for more than 1.3 billion people, reduced the number of people in poverty by more than 700 million, and provided employment for 770 million people. Poverty has been alleviated for more than 68 million people over the past five years alone, and under current standards in China the rural poor are certain to escape poverty by the year 2020.

8. This is a road that takes the rule of law as the criterion. As China perseveres in the integrated construction of a nation, Government and society under the rule of law, some 265 laws were enacted and put into effect by the end of April 2018, and the socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics is improving day by day. With a view to comprehensively promoting the rule of law, 190 major initiatives have been taken in six major areas and 30 fields since 2014, to bring about scientific legislation, strict law enforcement, impartial adjudication, a law-abiding populace, and a law-based civil service. At the same time, the specific tasks involved in strengthening judicial safeguards for human rights have been clearly put forward and implemented in an orderly manner.

9. This is a road that takes openness as the motivator. China pursues a mutually beneficial, win-win strategy of opening up to the outside world and opening its doors to engage in construction; it promotes self-development through reform and opening up, and while opening up, it also presents itself in the role of a major country as it shares development experience and opportunities with the world. From its previous receptivity to the outside world to its current active outward engagement with it, from joining the World Trade Organization to the building of the Belt and Road Initiative, China has made significant contributions to efforts to deal with the Asian financial crisis and the international financial crisis, and has accounted for more than 30 per cent of world economic growth for many years, effectively promoting the cause of peace, development and human rights.

10. China proposes to build a new type of international relationship featuring mutual respect, fairness, justice and win-win cooperation, to build a community with a shared future for mankind, and to provide a Chinese proposal for promoting the healthy development of the international cause of human rights. China firmly defends the basic principles of international law and the basic norms of international relations with the Charter of the United Nations at their core, and scrupulously fulfils its obligations under the international human rights treaties to which it has acceded. China opposes human rights politicization and "double standards", and upholds international fairness and justice. It advocates international human rights exchanges and cooperation on the basis of equality

and mutual respect, attaches increasing importance to the economic, social and cultural rights and the right to development that are of concern to developing countries, and promotes the comprehensive development of human rights of all kinds.

II. Legislative and institutional framework for the promotion and protection of human rights

A. Human rights legislation (recommendations 50, 54, 85, 95, 117, 118, 120, 121 and 135)

11. Since 2013, China has continuously improved and developed a socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics, comprising multiple legal departments of government, with the Constitution as its core and the law (including administrative regulations, local regulations and other normative documents) as its backbone, to be the foundation for safeguarding human rights and solidifying the rule of law. Citizens' rights to subsistence and development, as well as their personal rights, property rights, basic political rights and freedoms, labour rights, education rights, social security rights and other rights have been effectively protected and guaranteed through legislation.

12. By the end of April 2018, China had enacted 28 new laws, including the General Provisions of the Civil Law, the Law against Domestic Violence, the Charity Law, the Law on the Guarantee of Public Cultural Services and the Environmental Protection Tax Law. Amendment (IX) to the Criminal Law was passed and 134 separate amendments were made to the Population and Family Planning Law, the Education Law, the Environmental Protection Law, the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Elderly, the Law on Administrative Procedure and the Law on Civil Procedure. Legal regulations related to re-education through labour have been repealed, and the legal system for the safeguarding of human rights is undergoing continuous improvement, effectively raising the level of judicial safeguards for human rights and consolidating the social foundation for institutionalizing human rights safeguards. There are 265 laws currently in effect in China, and the socialist legal system with Chinese characteristics is improving day by day.

B. Accession by China to international human rights instruments and the current status of their implementation (recommendations 3–10, 14, 24–32, 52, 57, 58, 60 and 64)

13. China is a party to 26 international human rights treaties and their related protocols (see annex III). Since July 2013, the Chinese Government has participated, with a positive, confident, inclusive and open attitude, in the following reviews: of the second report on its implementation of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, by the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; of the combined third and fourth reports on its implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, by the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child; of the combined seventh and eighth reports on its implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women; and of the sixth report on its implementation of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, by the United Nations Committee against Torture. In 2017, China submitted follow-up replies to the Committee against Torture and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, and submitted a report on behalf of the Macao SAR on actions taken to follow up on the review of the first report on the latter's implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The combined fourteenth to seventeenth reports on its implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination were submitted to the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination for review in August 2018.

14. China has signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and the relevant departments of the Government are steadily continuing to advance administrative and judicial reforms in preparation for its ratification. China is also in the process of studying the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, along with other human rights instruments and their related protocols, as well as the issue of establishing a national human rights institution in accordance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles).

C. Institutional safeguards for human rights

1. Drafting a comprehensive plan for human rights development (recommendations 33–38)

15. The Chinese Government has responded positively to the proposal by the United Nations Human Rights Council and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights that a comprehensive national plan should be formulated for the development of human rights. Having met the main objectives of its second National Human Rights Action Plan (2012–2015), China issued and implemented its third National Human Rights Action Plan (2016–2020) in September 2016. China has set up a joint meeting mechanism for the Plan, comprising more than 50 government departments, which is responsible for the formulation, implementation and evaluation of the Plan. Chinese universities, research institutions, enterprises and non-governmental organizations actively participate in those functions as well. In order to enhance the awareness and comprehension of, respect for, and protection of human rights in society as a whole, China has also compiled special explanatory reading materials on the National Human Rights Action Plan.

2. Strengthening judicial safeguards for human rights through reform (recommendations 50, 53, 54, 124–126 and 133)

16. In 2014, China adopted the Decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Several Major Issues Concerning the Comprehensive Promotion of Law-based Governance, which clearly put forward specific tasks involved in "strengthening judicial safeguards for human rights". These tasks are currently being carried out in an orderly manner, and are embodied in related revised and improved laws.

17. For example, 18 reform tasks led by the Supreme People's Court have been completed, and 65 initiatives proposed for comprehensively deepening reform of the people's courts have been launched overall. The Supreme People's Court has set up six circuit courts; the system for registering litigation has been comprehensively reformed, with the rate of on-the-spot case registrations exceeding 95 per cent; the reform of the trial-centred criminal procedure system has been actively carried forward, and three procedural rules concerning pre-trial conferences, exclusion of illegal evidence and court investigations have been put into practice; and the reform of the people's assessor (lay judge) system has also proceeded, with people's assessors taking part in a total of 12.957 million cases throughout the country. The 29 reform tasks undertaken by the Supreme People's Procuratorate, such as ensuring the independent and impartial exercise of procuratorial power in accordance with the law, deepening the reform of the people's procuratorial oversight system, and promoting the extension of law-based structure to the process of dealing with litigation-related complaint letters and visits, have all been completed or wrapped up.

3. Human rights education (recommendations 39–48)

18. In its National Human Rights Action Plan (2016–2020), the Chinese Government has specifically defined the goals and tasks of human rights education. At present, the Seventh Five-Year Plan (2016–2020) for Promoting Public Awareness of and Education regarding the Rule of Law (abbreviated as the "Seventh Five-Year Legal Awareness Popularization Plan") takes the promotion of human rights and the rule of law as an important part of legal awareness education for all. To strengthen the concept of the rule of

law and awareness of human rights protections among State functionaries, the Information Office of the State Council held eight training courses on human rights awareness for Party and government officials and members of the judicial system from 2013 to 2017. The Supreme People's Procuratorate carried out human rights education and training for about 480,000 people in procuratorial organs at all levels throughout the country during the same period, and the Supreme People's Court held 69 demonstration training courses on the exclusion of illegal evidence and human rights awareness while training 20,081 judges. Public security organs at all levels have also improved their law enforcement training systems and offered legal awareness education courses covering such topics as human rights and the prohibition of torture.

19. China has established more than 32,000 training bases for education on law-based governance. Over 96.5 per cent of middle and primary schools have been allocated deputy principals or legal counsellors responsible for guidance and education regarding the law. Middle and primary schools have incorporated subject matter on personal, educational and economic rights in their textbooks, and the issuance of the Guidelines for Educating Adolescents on the Rule of Law is helping young people to conceptualize human rights and the rule of law. The Chinese Government encourages the news media to present columns and feature stories on human rights topics. Civil society organizations, such as the China Society for Human Rights Studies and the China Foundation for Human Rights Development, have raised awareness of human rights in society at large by holding a series of seminars as well as editing and publishing magazines and books on the topic. By the end of 2017, the China Society for Human Rights Studies had edited and published seven "Annual Blue Book Reports" on human rights in China.

4. Participation of non-governmental organizations, academic institutions and the information media in protecting human rights (recommendations 146, 148–150, 158, 165, 167, 168 and 170)

20. Some 755,200 social organizations had been duly registered in accordance with the law by the end of 2017. Their activities span the fields of education, science and technology, culture and health, social management, public welfare and charity, and the protection of human rights. Since 2013, China has, inter alia, adopted the Charity Law, amended the Regulations on the Registration and Regulation of Social Organizations, and promulgated the Opinions on Reforming the Management System of Social Organizations to Promote their Healthy and Orderly Development, thereby promoting and encouraging the development of non-governmental organizations in the field of human rights protection. The Law on the Administration of Activities of Overseas Non-Governmental Organizations in the Mainland of China, which went into effect in 2017, provides legal protections for the rights and activities of overseas non-governmental organizations.

21. China has eight national human rights education and training centres. These academic institutions take full advantage of their greatest strengths to take an active part in providing policy advice, education and training, as well as conduct overseas exchanges, in the field of human rights. In recent years, the Chinese Government has gradually established and improved the legal and regulatory systems related to the field of journalism and broadcasting, including encouraging the media to exercise social oversight by reflecting public opinion in accordance with the law, safeguarding the lawful rights and interests of journalists, and protecting the intellectual property rights of news and publishing entities. China respects and guarantees the lawful exercise of the right of social oversight by media and journalists through news coverage, and investigates cases of offences against journalists and media in accordance with the law; where the circumstances constitute a crime, those responsible are held accountable according to law.

III. Achievements and practices in the promotion and protection of human rights

A. Economic, social and cultural rights

1. Rights to subsistence and to development (recommendations 56, 76, 183, 184, 185, 188, 189, 190–195, 200, 244–252)

22. Since 2013, the economy and society of China have maintained stable and healthy development. Gross domestic product increased from 54 trillion to 82.7 trillion yuan, with an average annual growth of 7.1 per cent; the country's share of the world economy grew from 11.4 per cent to about 15 per cent, with its contribution to world economic growth surpassing 30 per cent. Urban and rural per capita disposable income maintained average annual growth of 6.5 per cent and 7.9 per cent respectively, creating the world's largest middle-income group. Consumer prices rose by 1.9 per cent annually, remaining relatively low. In 2016, China issued the 13th Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development of the People's Republic of China, which outlines a grand blueprint for economic and social development from 2016 to 2020. Concrete implementation of the 13th Five-Year Plan is playing, and will continue to play, an important role in guaranteeing the people's economic, social and cultural rights and improving the living standards of the people.

23. The Chinese Government takes the realization of the people's rights to subsistence and development as its top priority. It regards targeted poverty alleviation and poverty reduction as the basic strategy for overcoming poverty, and has made remarkable progress in promoting the aforementioned rights for the poor and for vulnerable groups. From 2013 to 2017, a total of 282.2 billion yuan was specifically allocated for poverty alleviation by the financial authorities of the Central Government, with a cumulative five-year reduction in the number of rural poor by 68.53 million. The incidence of poverty dropped from 10.2 per cent at the end of 2012 to 3.1 per cent at the end of 2017, as the per capita disposable income of rural residents in poverty-stricken areas increased by 10.4 per cent annually, a real growth rate 2.5 percentage points higher than the national rural average. Eighty per cent of the major water-conservation and supply-conservancy projects designated by the Chinese Government are located in the central and western regions of the country and in contiguous poverty-stricken areas, where they have resolved drinking-water safety problems for 171 million rural residents and 23.44 million teachers and students in rural schools, and further consolidated and upgraded drinking-water conditions for 95.09 million rural residents.

24. China has actively participated in international exchanges on poverty reduction and held more than 30 high-level meetings, symposiums and exchanges through the Global Poverty Reduction and Development Forum, the China–ASEAN Forum on Social Development and Poverty Reduction, and the Forum on China–Africa Cooperation – Conference on Poverty Reduction and Development. An information-sharing website for South-South cooperation on poverty reduction was launched in 2016. A memorandum of understanding on poverty-reduction cooperation was signed with countries involved in Asia, Africa and Latin America, and a demonstration technical-assistance cooperation project for poverty reduction in East Asia was implemented in Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar. Nearly 70 training courses on poverty reduction have been held, and specialized training on poverty reduction has been held for relevant staff from 106 countries. Since 2013, China has also provided water aid to more than 100 African, Asian, Eastern European and Latin American countries.

2. Rights to work, to social security and to housing (recommendations 89, 90, 92, 174–179, 180, 181, 183, 186, 187 and 196–198)

25. The Chinese Government places employment promotion at the top of its economic and social development priorities, pursues an employment-prioritization strategy and more proactive employment policies, and strives to achieve higher-quality and fuller employment. During the 2013–2017 period, the cumulative number of new hires in urban areas reached 66.09 million, and the registered unemployment rate in cities and towns remained below

4.1 per cent. A cumulative total of 27.9 million urban unemployed persons gained re-employment, as well as 8.76 million people who had been having difficulty finding jobs. The overall employment rate of college graduates is above 90 per cent. Since 2013, China has amended and strengthened the implementation of the Labour Contract Law and the Work Safety Law, promulgated the Special Provisions on the Labour Protection of Female Employees and the Measures for the Implementation of Administrative Licences for Labour Dispatch, and continuously improved the legal and policy systems governing labour relations. From 2013 to 2017, labour and social-security supervisory organs throughout the country recovered 163.59 billion yuan in back wages for 20.952 million workers. At the same time, collective wage consultation was actively and steadily pushed forward and reasonable increases were applied to the minimum wage standard. Accelerated expansion of the prevention and control system for safety in production has effectively ensured the safety of labourers. Compared with 2012, the number of accidents and deaths in 2017 decreased by 33.9 per cent and 22.2 per cent respectively, continuing that "double decrease" for the fifteenth consecutive year.

26. China has established the largest social security system in the world, covering the largest number of people and pushing up the worldwide rate of social security coverage by 11 percentage points. By the end of 2017, 915 million people had basic pension insurance, 1.35 billion were covered by basic medical insurance, and 227 million, 188 million and 192 million had industrial-injury, unemployment and maternity insurance respectively. The level of social security benefits has steadily risen in China. The basic pensions of retirees nationwide have risen for 13 consecutive years since 2005, while the standard subsidy for basic medical insurance for urban and rural residents rose from 240 yuan in 2012 to 450 yuan in 2017. At the same time, benefit levels for unemployment, work-related injury and maternity insurance have all risen in tandem with economic growth. The Regulations on Unemployment Insurance are being revised to further improve the unemployment insurance system. The social assistance system has also been further improved, and the basic living requirements of nearly 60 million minimum subsistence allowance recipients and the extremely needy have been guaranteed.

27. The Chinese Government actively promotes the construction of government-assisted low-income housing, vigorously implements the redevelopment of run-down areas, and strives to improve the living conditions and living environment of the people. Between 2013 and 2017, the Government allocated a cumulative total of more than 1 trillion yuan in subsidies to government-subsidized housing projects in urban areas, supported the renovation of more than 26 million run-down dwellings, built more than 6 million public rental-housing units, and improved living conditions for more than 80 million people with housing difficulties. Since 2013, the Chinese Government has allocated a cumulative total of 135.9 billion yuan in subsidies to support the renovation of dilapidated housing for 14.69 million poor rural households. The average household allowance is 7,500 yuan, an increase of 1,000 yuan per household in poverty-stricken areas. Starting in 2017, the Central Government financial authorities have concentrated support on the reconstruction of dilapidated housing for registered poor households and other such recipients; the subsidy standard has been raised to 14,000 yuan, significantly improving the level of housing security for poor rural households.

28. In order to solve the problem of alleviating the poverty of the people in areas where the land they are living on cannot support them, the Chinese Government has implemented a project for poverty alleviation through relocation. Between 2013 and 2017, the Central Government allocated a cumulative total of more than 80 billion yuan in subsidies to support the relocation of 8.3 million registered poor people, provide safe and practical housing for them, and support the building of the necessary basic infrastructure and basic public-service facilities to enable them to escape poverty and take part in development.

3. The right to education and cultural rights (recommendations 56, 119, 205–218 and 219–222)

29. Education in China ranks first in the world in its scale. Since 2012, national fiscal appropriations for education have continued to exceed 4 per cent of gross domestic product. In 2017, the net enrolment rate of primary-school-age children reached 99.91 per cent, the

gross junior middle-school enrolment rate reached 103.5 per cent, the nine-year compulsory education graduation rate reached 93.8 per cent nationwide, and the rate at which compulsory education expanded surpassed the average levels for the world's high-income countries.

30. The Chinese Government has adopted a series of policies and measures to strengthen the provision of educational resources in remote, rural and ethnic-minority areas. From 2014 to 2017, the Central Government financial authorities invested more than 162 billion yuan to improve the operating conditions for underperforming rural compulsory-education schools, benefiting more than 60 million compulsory-education students. As of 2017, the Central Government financial authorities had invested 104.7 billion yuan in food-subsidy funds, benefiting more than 37 million rural students. Financial assistance to students from economically disadvantaged families in schools of all kinds was broadened, resulting in 430 million person-time instances of benefit. The State has fully achieved free nine-year compulsory education, with 15 years of free education in some ethnic-minority areas.

31. China strives to protect the right to education for the children of rural migrant workers and people with disabilities. In 2017, more than 80 per cent of the children accompanying rural migrant workers attended public schools during the compulsory education stage, and all accompanying children enjoyed the same policy of "two exemptions and one subsidy" (i.e. exemptions from tuition and textbook costs, plus living allowance for financially disadvantaged boarding students). Beginning in 2014, two consecutive special education promotion programmes have been implemented, and the compulsory education enrolment rate for children with visual, hearing or mental disabilities exceeds 90 per cent.

32. Attaching great importance to protecting offenders' rights to education, prisons in China formulate outlines and regulations for the education and reform of offenders, and promote the incorporation of literacy and vocational skills training for offenders into government planning.

33. Since 2013, Chinese governments at all levels have steadily increased their cultural input, focusing on the western regions and tilting towards the grass roots to protect the cultural rights and interests of special groups. A project for comprehensive cultural service-centre coverage in ethnic autonomous counties and in border counties and villages in poverty-stricken areas has been under implementation since 2016. In 2016 and 2017, some 1.424 billion yuan were allocated to subsidize construction of 17,643 village-level comprehensive cultural centres. There are more than ten thousand ethnic cultural institutions nationwide. The list of national-level representative intangible cultural heritage projects includes projects from 55 Chinese ethnic minorities. Nearly 40 per cent of representative intangible cultural heritage projects are those of ethnic minorities, and 36 per cent of the representative transmitters of intangible cultural heritage at the national level are members of ethnic minorities.

4. Right to health; the ecological environment and human rights (recommendations 187, 188, 199, 201–204 and 246)

34. China is accelerating the promotion of steps to build a healthy China, and striving to provide the people with health and health services at every stage of the life cycle. An outline of the "Healthy China 2030" Plan was issued in 2016. Average life expectancy in China increased from 74.8 years in 2010 to 76.5 years in 2016; maternal mortality dropped from 30 per 100,000 in 2010 to 19.6 per 100,000 in 2017, and infant mortality from 13.1 per 1,000 in 2010 to 6.8 per 1,000 in 2017. The primary health indicators of the people are generally better than the corresponding average levels for middle- and high-income countries, resulting in the early achievement of the relevant United Nations Millennium Development Goals.

35. China is actively improving the availability and fairness of public health services. Basic public health services will continue to be provided free of charge at the national level for all residents, and the establishment of a new mechanism to resolve the problem of medicine shortages and guarantee their supply is being explored. In 2017, the rates at which

pregnant women and children under 3 were provided systematic care reached 89.6 per cent and 91.2 per cent respectively. China has built the world's largest network system for directly reporting information on statutorily notifiable infectious disease outbreaks and public health emergencies, with average reporting time shortened to four hours. China actively provides health publicity, education and consultation for the public, supports non-governmental organizations' provision of community health services, holds annual National Environment and Health Publicity Week activities, and issues publications such as "Environment and Health Literacy for Chinese Citizens" and "Dietary Guidelines for Chinese Residents" to popularize health information and skills.

36. The Chinese Government has incorporated the building of ecological civilization into the system of human rights safeguards. The overall condition of the ecological environment continues to improve. Solid results have been achieved following the formulation of three sets of "ten regulations" for the prevention and control of air, water and soil pollution. The discharge of major pollutants has continued to decline, the number of days of heavy pollution in key cities has been reduced by half, forests have increased in area by 163 million *mu* (10.872 million hectares), the area of desertified land is being reduced by nearly 2,000 square kilometres annually, and green development has shown gratifying results. Laws on environmental protection, air pollution prevention and wildlife protection are being drafted and amended to protect citizens' rights to environmental information, participation and oversight. The Government is also actively promoting the signing and entry into force of the Paris Agreement, and its South-South cooperation project to set up low-carbon demonstration zones, launch climate-change mitigation and adaptation programmes and train participants from developing countries is progressing smoothly.

B. Civil and political rights

1. Safeguarding the rights to life and to liberty of person (recommendations 110, 111, 117, 118, 120, 121, 123 and 237–240)

37. "To retain the death penalty, control it strictly and apply it prudently" is the basic policy regarding the death penalty in China. In 2015, China passed Amendment (IX) to the Criminal Law, under which the death penalty was abolished for nine more crimes, in line with the abolition of the death penalty for 13 non-violent economic crimes in the 2011 Amendment (VIII) to the Criminal Law. Apart from the crimes of corruption and bribery, crimes subject to the death penalty as currently retained are essentially those related directly to national security, public security and the security of the people's lives, along with crimes committed by military personnel in dereliction of duty. To further improve the provisions on capital punishment of convicts under suspended sentence of execution, the criterion for carrying out the death penalty was changed from having "committed a crime with verified evidence of criminal intent" during the period of suspension to having "intentionally committed a crime with aggravated circumstances", thereby raising the standard for application of the death penalty.

38. The Supreme People's Procuratorate has established a Procuratorial Office of Death Penalty Review to exercise rigorous procedural oversight of the application of laws on death penalty review. Full court hearings are held for second-instance death penalty appeals, and more attention is being paid to hearing the opinions of defence counsel in death penalty review cases. If an accused person has not engaged a defender in a death penalty review case before a higher people's court, a legal-aid institution should be notified so that it can appoint a lawyer for that person's defence.

39. In December 2015, China promulgated the Counter-Terrorism Law to further solidify the structure of the legal system for combating terrorism. In accordance with the law, the Chinese Government has handled cases of inciting and organizing acts of self-immolation, and the public security organs have cracked down hard on terrorist organizations and individuals, including "East Turkistan" forces, in accordance with the law, while at the same time ensuring that the human rights of criminal suspects are protected.

40. China has continuously upgraded the procedures for lifting and modifying coercive measures against criminal suspects and defendants, and reduced the application of coercive custodial measures. From 2012 to 2016, procuratorial organs throughout the country recommended the lifting or modification of coercive measures against 12,552 suspects whose continued detention was no longer necessary. In August 2015, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress decided, in accordance with the law, to grant amnesty to 31,527 convicts serving sentences. China continues to improve the conditions of custody and supervision to ensure that the personal security of detainees and prisoners is not violated. Detention facilities throughout the country have set up psychological counselling rooms for detainees; more than 2,500 detention centres have initiated two-way video interviews of prisoners via the Internet, and electronic legal-aid centre workstations have been set up in detention facilities to provide legal assistance for detainees. Strengthening of corrections management and the coordination of efforts to address the problems of employment, schooling, minimum-subsistence security, temporary assistance and social insurance for prisoners are continuing at the community level.

2. Voting rights, political participation and the right of oversight (recommendations 168, 170 and 171–173)

41. China has established the largest grass-roots democratic electoral system, as well as a grass-roots mass self-government system, primarily in the form of rural villagers' committees and urban community residents' committees. In rural areas, village committees have broadly implemented direct elections, in which the average participation rate exceeds 90 per cent, and 98 per cent of villages have formulated village rules, regulations and statutes for their self-governance; in urban areas, 106,000 community residents' committees have been set up nationwide. The channels for the orderly participation of the masses in human rights protection and grass-roots governance are being continuously broadened.

42. Laws and policies on women's participation in decision-making and management in China are being constantly improved, and women's influence in the building of democratic governance policy at the national level has been increasing. Women represented 24.2 per cent of all delegates to the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, held in 2017, an increase of 1.2 percentage points over the previous Congress. Women also accounted for 24.9 per cent of the deputies to the 13th National People's Congress, an increase of 1.5 percentage points over that body's previous session, and 20.39 per cent of the members of the thirteenth session of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference were women, an increase of 2.55 percentage points over that body's previous session.

43. Further safeguards are being extended to citizens' rights of democratic oversight. In 2015, the National People's Congress amended the Legislative Law to clearly stipulate a system of feedback and social openness for examination applicants and to strengthen citizens' right of oversight. In 2014, the Budget Law was amended, and the Opinions on the Establishment of a Mechanism for Hearing the Opinions and Suggestions of National People's Congress Representatives and All Sectors of Society Prior to the Review of the Budget were promulgated to promote budgetary openness and democratic oversight. The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference actively explores and improves democratic supervision mechanisms, and puts forward criticism and suggestions on problems that arise in the implementation of policy decisions. The Supreme People's Procuratorate and the Ministry of Justice have issued the Plan for Deepening the Reform of the People's Supervisor System to further strengthen public oversight. The State Bureau for Letters and Calls has made use of the Internet to establish a national system for information on petitions, and is also implementing a system for assessing public satisfaction regarding the handling of petition letters and visits and for evaluating and tracking the way in which the matters raised in such letters and visits are handled.

3. Prohibition of torture (recommendations 49 and 51)

44. The Criminal Procedure Law clearly stipulates that evidence collected illegally should be excluded, providing an effective institutional guarantee under which human rights protections can be strengthened and judicial impartiality ensured. Detailed

regulations regarding the prohibition of torture and the exclusion of illegal evidence are contained in Several Opinions on Improving the Judicial Accountability System of the People's Procuratorates, issued in 2015, along with the Regulations on Several Questions Regarding the Strict Exclusion of Illegal Evidence in Handling Criminal Cases and the Opinions on Advancing the Reform of the Trial-Centred Criminal Procedure System, both implemented in 2016.

45. Public security organs nationwide have broadly completed the standardized renovations of facilities for processing law enforcement cases. Case-processing areas are physically separated from other functional areas of the building, ensuring that the crime suspects in the case-processing area are fed and given the necessary rest time. Upon arrival at the public security organ, all criminal suspects are brought directly into the case-processing area, which is required to maintain video surveillance and sound recording without exception. The Ministry of Public Security has increased its investment in criminal investigation technology, and is eradicating the use of torture to extract confessions at its source. Moreover, the procuratorial organs are strengthening their supervision and review of legal and regulatory violations occurring in the course of investigations, and the abuse of coercive measures, illegal evidence collection and extortion of confessions by torture are being effectively curbed. The Chinese prison system is greatly strengthening the education of the People's Prison Police regarding the prohibition of torture in law enforcement and is carrying out in-depth supervision and review of the enforcement of the law.

4. The right to fair adjudication (recommendations 55, 129–134 and 158)

46. China is continuously deepening judicial reform, actively promoting the trial-centred criminal procedure system, improving the defence/advocate system, and perfecting the systems of judicial remedies and legal assistance at the national level, while also fostering the independent and impartial exercise of judicial power in accordance with the law; the channels for citizens to participate in the administration of justice continue to broaden, and measures extending judicial conveniences to citizens, such as public centres for litigation services and other legal services, are being continuously upgraded. A system for registering litigation cases was fully implemented in 2015, effectively ensuring protection of litigants' right to take legal action. In April 2018, China enacted the Law on People's Assessors, which protects citizens' participation in judicial activities in accordance with the law and promotes judicial impartiality.

47. China vigorously promotes judicial openness. The people's courts are building openness on the four major platforms of trial processes and procedures, court activities, judgment documentation, and information regarding court actions. As of June 2018, 47.05 million court documents had been made publicly available, with 16.4 billion visits/views from a range covering more than 210 countries and regions. The procuratorial organs have established a public case-information disclosure system, whose operation also spans four major platforms: requests for information regarding case procedures, disclosure of legal documents, release of information on major cases, and applications for appointments with defence advocates and surrogates.

48. The Supreme People's Court, the Supreme People's Procuratorate, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Public Security have issued a series of documents such as the Notice on Further Strengthening and Improving the Disposition of Law Enforcement Cases to Conscientiously Prevent Miscarriages of Justice. During the 2013–2017 period, courts at all levels rectified 39 serious cases involving 78 persons who had been unjustly, falsely or erroneously charged, and declared the innocence of a further 4,874 accused persons in accordance with the law.

49. In 2013, the Provisions on Legal Aid in Criminal Proceedings were issued, under which legal aid institutions appoint advocates to defend criminal suspects and accused persons who have not engaged counsel in specific cases owing to financial difficulties, thereby guaranteeing the rights of criminal suspects and accused persons to legal defence. From 2013 to 2017, legal aid institutions at all levels provided legal aid to more than 1.269 million criminal suspects and accused persons.

50. Between 2014 and 2017, China successively promulgated the Provisions on Legally Safeguarding Lawyers' Rights to Practise Law and the Notice on Establishing and Improving the Rapid Interaction and Response Mechanism for the Protection of Lawyers' Rights to Practise Law, launched a pilot programme to ensure that criminal cases are fully covered by defence lawyers, and improved the relief and accountability mechanisms for safeguarding lawyers' rights to practise law. By the end of 2017, there were 365,000 lawyers and 28,000 law firms nationwide, representing increases of 44.61 per cent and 40 per cent, respectively, over 2013.

51. Between 2015 and 2017, the Chinese Government successively issued such documents as the Opinions on Establishing a Mechanism to Link the Regulation and Application of Forensic Appraisal, and the Implementing Opinion on Improving the Unified Forensic Appraisal Regulation System, providing safeguards for implementing a system for court appearances by forensic experts and protecting the right of the parties to receive a fair trial.

5. Freedom of religious belief (recommendations 55, 136, 138–141, 143–145, 147 and 231)

52. China is accelerating the development of laws and systems for protecting the freedom of religious belief. The Electoral Law and the Education Law stipulate that citizens' political rights and the right to receive education do not differ according to their religious beliefs. The Criminal Law stipulates punishment of functionaries of State organs in accordance with the law for illegally depriving citizens of their freedom of religious belief or interfering with the customs and practices of ethnic minorities. The Provisions on the Regulation of Religious Activities of Foreigners within the Territory of the People's Republic of China emphasize that the religious activities of foreigners in China are protected under the law. The Regulations on Religious Affairs, which were revised and re-promulgated in 2017, strengthened the protection of citizens' freedom of religious belief and the lawful rights and interests of the religious community.

53. The principal religions of China are Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Catholicism and Protestantism, with nearly 200 million religious-adherent citizens and more than 380,000 clerical personnel. In accordance with the law, the State registers sites for adherents to engage in group religious activities; currently, 144,000 such sites have been duly registered under the law. The Islamic Association of China organizes yearly hajj pilgrimages to Mecca for Muslims, with more than 10,000 participating each year since 2007.

6. Freedom of speech and of the news media (recommendations 154, 155, 157, 162–170 and 173)

54. The Chinese Government protects citizens' freedom of speech, and the freedom of the press, in accordance with the law. China has the largest number of Internet users in the world, with an Internet penetration rate exceeding the global average. As of December 2017, the number of netizens in China had reached 772 million and the Internet penetration rate had reached 55.3 per cent. Netizens express their views via Internet platforms such as news commentary sites, forums, blogs, micro-blogs and WeChat, offering criticisms and suggestions on the work of governments at all levels and exercising oversight over the conduct of public servants.

55. Chinese journalism and publishing are developing steadily in scale, with more than 1,900 newspapers and 9,800 periodicals in publication. China has more than 2,500 radio and television broadcasting entities and more than 200 million cable television users; broadcast radio and television reach 98.71 per cent and 99.07 per cent of the overall population respectively. China has actively and conscientiously implemented the Measures for Regulating the Accreditation of Journalists and the Measures for Regulating Newspaper and Periodical Correspondents' Bureaux, protecting the lawful rights of news media, branches and journalists to cover the news and facilitate social oversight by channelling public opinion.

56. The State comprehensively promotes openness in government affairs. The State Council has implemented the Regulations on the Disclosure of Government Information, focusing on promoting the disclosure of information in the fields of administrative review

and approval, fiscal budgets and auditing, affordable housing, food and drug safety, and land expropriation, demolition and resettlement. As of May 2018, barrier-free information accessibility had been fully implemented on 30,000 government websites at all levels throughout the country. Systems for soliciting public opinion have been broadly established in many localities, along with specialized bodies set up for the purpose of opening a green channel for citizens to take part in State governance and social affairs.

C. Rights of special groups

1. Women's rights (recommendations 74, 75, 84, 88, 91–93 and 95, 99)

57. China has created a legislative system for the protection of women's rights and interests, based on the Constitution and primarily embodied in the Law on the Protection of Women's Rights and Interests, and including more than 100 other laws and regulations, such as, inter alia, the Employment Promotion Law and the Special Provisions on the Labour Protection of Female Employees. The Anti-Domestic Violence Law formally went into effect in 2016, providing a new legal weapon for protecting women's personal rights.

58. The Chinese Government has integrated women's development into its overall national economic and social development planning. The State Council has successively promulgated outlines for three cycles of development for Chinese women, clearly defining the overall goals, key areas and strategic measures for women's development at each stage. The Outline for the Development of Women in China (2011–2020), which is currently being implemented, identifies 7 priority areas and proposes 57 main objectives and 88 strategic measures.

59. China conscientiously ensures the realization of women's development rights of all kinds. The employment structure for women is continuously improving, with women accounting for 43.1 per cent of the total employed population nationwide. Women entrepreneurs account for about one fourth of the total number of entrepreneurs, and 55 per cent of the entrepreneurs in the Internet field. The protection of female employees' rights and interests in specific collective agreements is being deepened. The gender gap in education is gradually disappearing; the proportion of women among the highly educated has increased significantly, and the issue of the highly imbalanced sex ratio of births is being comprehensively addressed. The Regulations on the Prohibition of Non-Medically Necessary Fetal Gender Determination and Sex-Selective Artificial Termination of Pregnancy were revised in 2016, strengthening the routine regulation of fetal sex determination and selective termination of pregnancy for non-medical purposes.

2. Children's rights (recommendations 74, 75, 77–81, 83, 84, 86, 87, 96–98, 101, 104 and 183)

60. China attaches great importance to the protection of children's rights and interests. The General Principles of the Civil Law stipulate the protection of children's rights and interests, and further clarify the system for revoking guardians' qualifications, as do the Opinions on Legally Handling Several Issues regarding Infringement by Guardians upon the Rights and Interests of Minors. A chapter on litigation procedure for juvenile criminal cases has been added to the Criminal Procedure Law of China, and Amendment (IX) to the Criminal Law increases punishments for maltreating, abducting or sexually abusing children. Amendments of the Law on the Protection of Minors and the Law on the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency effectively protect the physical and mental health of minors. The Chinese Action Plan against Human Trafficking (2013–2020) is also being implemented.

61. China has integrated child development into its overall national economic and social development planning, drafting and implementing the Outline for the Development of Children in China (2011–2020) and the National Programme for the Development of Children in Poor Areas (2014–2020), and solidifying the system for protecting children's rights and interests and for providing them with care and services.

62. China is continuously improving the system of safeguards for vulnerable children. In 2016, the State Council issued the Opinion on Strengthening Protections for Children in Difficulty, which strengthens protections for children with serious illnesses or disabilities in low-income families, street children, orphans and children infected with HIV/AIDS, and children without effective guardianship. During the 2011–2017 period, the Central Government allocated 15.06 billion yuan in basic living-allowance funds for orphans. By 2017, there were 1,442 child welfare institutions and 245 protection centres for minors throughout the country. Since 2016, the Ministry of Civil Affairs and other departments have been carrying out a "joined in guardianship, growing together" campaign to strengthen intervention and assistance for inadequately supervised children, school dropouts, rural left-behind children, children in difficulty and other key target groups.

3. Rights of the elderly and of persons with disabilities (recommendations 74–76, 84, 100, 102, 103, 105, 106, 182 and 183)

63. The number of people in China over 60 years of age had reached 240 million by 2017, accounting for 17.3 per cent of the total population. The strategic level at which China is responding to the ageing of its population is the same as those of its efforts to ensure overall national development and the well-being of its millions upon millions of people.

64. Since 2012, China has amended the Law on the Protection of the Rights and Interests of the Elderly, promulgated more than 70 policy documents, such as "Some Opinions on Accelerating the Development of Services for the Elderly" and the "National Plan for the Development of Undertakings for the Elderly and the Establishment of an Elder-Care System under the 13th Five-Year Plan", and taken the first steps towards establishing a systematic pension regulation policy.

65. China has basically created a home-based, community-reliant pension service system that receives supplementary institutional support and combines medical care and health maintenance. As of 2017, there were 155,000 pension services institutions and facilities of all kinds throughout the country, with 7.448 million beds. Community elder-care services cover just about all urban communities and more than half of rural communities.

66. China has strengthened social assistance and welfare security for the elderly, and has integrated 17.817 million needy older persons within the scope of the minimum-subsistence allowance and 4.102 million especially needy older persons within the scope of government assistance.

67. There are about 85 million persons with disabilities in China, and China has now established a relatively complete system of laws and regulations for them. In 2017, it promulgated and implemented the Regulations on Disability Prevention and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, and revised and passed the Regulations on the Education of Persons with Disabilities. The State Council has also approved the establishment of a Disability Prevention Day.

68. The State has integrated the affairs of persons with disabilities into its overall plan for national economic and social development. The 13th Five-Year Plan clearly establishes and improves the basic welfare protection system for persons with disabilities, enhances employment and entrepreneurship support policies for persons with disabilities, and implements key rehabilitation projects. The State Council has promulgated the Plan Outline for Accelerating the Process of Bringing Moderate Prosperity to Persons with Disabilities under the 13th Five-Year Plan, further clarifying the main objectives and specific tasks for the cause of persons with disabilities. By the end of 2017, 10.62 million persons with disabilities and 11.65 million persons with severe disabilities had benefited from the comprehensive establishment of a living allowance system for persons with disabilities and a nursing allowance system for persons with severe disabilities.

69. Since 2013, the Chinese Government has set up information files on the employment and training of nearly 18 million persons with disabilities, adding 333,000 newly hired persons with disabilities annually and establishing more than 6,000 vocational skills training institutions for persons with disabilities nationwide. By the end of 2016, the

pension insurance coverage rate for persons with disabilities had reached 79 per cent, and the government contribution rate for persons with severe disabilities had reached 92.5 per cent. During the 2013–2017 period, 5.38 million persons with disabilities were lifted out of poverty, and about 20 million persons with disabilities received basic rehabilitation services. By the end of 2017, nearly 1,000 public libraries had set up reading rooms for Braille materials and audiobooks; a cumulative total of 9,053 fitness demonstration sites for persons with disabilities had been set up; and the families of 222,000 people with severe disabilities had enjoyed the services of rehabilitation sports and family care projects.

4. Rights of ethnic minorities (recommendations 219–224, 226–229, 231 and 234)

70. China is a unified multi-ethnic country. Excluding the Han ethnic group, it has a total population of 113.79 million members of ethnic minorities, accounting for 8.49 per cent of the country's overall population. The Chinese Government has always attached great importance to the development of the cause of ethnic minorities' human rights.

71. The political rights of ethnic minorities are protected and ensured. There are deputies to the National People's Congress and members of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference from 55 ethnic minority groups. Even if their numbers fall short of the level normally required to qualify for one representative, ethnic groups with particularly small populations still have at least one representative. The chairpersons, prefecture leaders, county heads or banner chiefs of the governments of 155 autonomous areas of China are all members of ethnic groups exercising regional autonomy. The total number of ethnic-minority government functionaries in China now exceeds 3 million, having increased more than threefold since 1978.

72. Support for economic and social development in ethnic minority areas is increasing. From 2013 to 2017, a total of 7.1 billion yuan was allocated from the Central Government budget, and the Central Government financial authorities dedicated 21.7 billion yuan in poverty alleviation funds for ethnic minority development. By 2017, the gross domestic product of the eight ethnic-minority autonomous regions and provinces with concentrated distributions of ethnic minorities had reached 8.4899 trillion yuan, a 7.6-per-cent annual growth rate that was 0.7 percentage points higher than the national average. The number of poor people in those areas had dropped from 50.4 million in 2010 to 10.32 million, and the poverty headcount ratio had dropped from 34.1 per cent to 6.8 per cent.

73. The linguistic and educational rights and interests of ethnic minorities are protected. At the national level, some 40 laws and regulations, including the Constitution, provide for the use and development of the spoken and written languages used by ethnic minorities. Bilingual education, using 29 writing systems of 21 ethnic groups, is conducted in more than 10,000 schools across the country, reaching an enrolment of 4 million students.

74. The gross domestic product of the Tibet Autonomous Region has maintained double-digit growth for 24 consecutive years. In 2017, it reached 131.06 billion yuan, while the per capita disposable income of urban residents rose to 30,671 yuan and that of rural residents rose to 10,330 yuan, representing year-on-year increases of 10.0, 10.3 and 13.6 per cent respectively. The Region's policy of 15 years' free education from preschool to upper secondary school, with full coverage of room, board and tuition, has been comprehensively propagated and is the highest free education standard in China.

75. Xinjiang has been carrying out "Year of Building People's Livelihood" initiatives continuously since 2013, accounting for more than 70 per cent of its annual public budget expenditure. In 2017, the per capita disposable income of urban and rural residents in Xinjiang increased by 8.1 per cent and 8.5 per cent respectively, and urban and rural residents' per capita housing area reached 85 square metres and 105 square metres respectively. The 15 years' free education programme has been implemented in southern Xinjiang, along with 3 years' free bilingual preschool education in rural areas.

D. Participation in international human rights activities

1. Cooperation with the major United Nations human rights mechanisms and bodies (recommendations 34, 60, 62–65, 68, 69, 71 and 73)

76. Since 2013, China has actively participated in global human rights governance and has put forward a series of initiatives in such forums as the Human Rights Council to promote the construction of a fair, just, reasonable and effective international human rights system. It maintains constructive contacts with the United Nations Office at Geneva and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, encourages them to perform their duties objectively and impartially, and attaches importance to the concerns of developing countries. It has donated US$ 100,000 to the Special Rapporteur on the right to development, and hosted visits to China by the Working Group on the issue of discrimination against women in law and in practice, the Independent Expert on the effects of foreign debt, the Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights, members of the Committee against Torture, and the Chair of the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. China treats communications from the special mechanism of the Human Rights Council with seriousness, and provides timely responses on the basis of careful investigation. It is deeply involved in the work of the relevant human rights mechanisms, and serves as a member of the Human Rights Council Advisory Committee and Working Group on Situations. It encourages non-governmental organizations to take an active part in human rights mechanisms such as the Human Rights Council. China also actively supports the work of the human rights treaty bodies, and provided replies to questions on its implementation of General Assembly resolution 68/268 in 2016 and 2018 respectively. It attaches importance to the conclusions and recommendations put forward by the treaty bodies and carries out follow-up work in a targeted manner.

2. Bilateral and multilateral exchanges and cooperation on human rights (recommendations 67, 242 and 251)

77. China actively promotes the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, is earnestly implementing the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and actively promoted the achievement and entry into force of the Paris Agreement. Under the framework of South-South cooperation, China is steadily expanding the scale of its aid to other developing countries. It has put forward the Belt and Road Initiative, set up the Silk Road investment fund, and initiated the establishment of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and, together with the other BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa), the New Development Bank. China supports and assists aid-recipient countries' efforts to enhance their own development capabilities, reduce poverty, improve their people's livelihoods, and protect the environment, thereby creating better conditions for all peoples to realize the right to development. China has provided a cumulative total of more than 400 billion yuan in foreign aid funds, helped recipient countries implement more than 5,000 foreign aid projects, and dispatched more than 600,000 aid workers to help more than 120 developing countries implement the Millennium Development Goals. It applies duty-free treatment to 97 per cent of the products exported to China by 37 least developed countries, reducing tax dues by 1.3 billion yuan in 2017.

78. Since 2013, China has enhanced understanding and shared experiences by holding more than 50 human rights dialogues with over 20 countries and carrying out exchanges of legal experts between China and the United States of America, as well as technical cooperation on human rights with Australia. In 2016, China held an international seminar in Beijing to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the United Nations Declaration on the Right to Development; in 2017 it held the first South-South Human Rights Forum, which promoted international dialogue and exchanges on human rights. Civil society organizations in the human rights field, such as the China Society for Human Rights Studies, have actively carried out exchanges and cooperation on human rights, successfully hosting three annual "Beijing Forums on Human Rights" and three Sino-European human rights seminars, and actively participating in international human rights conferences and activities.

79. In our commitment to a people-centred approach, we are accelerating the legislative process of consular protection, making every effort to build a mechanism for protecting the safety and security of Chinese nationals abroad, improving the level of consular protection and service and, through such channels as bilateral consular consultations and human rights dialogues, motivating the countries concerned to take effective measures to ensure the security and lawful rights and interests of overseas Chinese citizens and institutions.

IV. Challenges and future goals

A. Difficulties and challenges

80. No country's human rights situation is perfect. China still faces many difficulties and challenges in promoting and protecting human rights. Chief among these are the following:

81. China is still the largest developing country in the world, and some outstanding problems of unbalanced and inadequate development remain unsolved. Its economic development model is based on extensive growth, the impetus for endogenous economic growth is deficient, its ability to innovate is insufficiently strong, the quality and efficiency of its development is not high enough, and the level of its real economy needs improvement. Some enterprises, especially small and medium-sized ones, experience operational difficulties; private investment growth is weak, with great downward economic pressure in some regions, and the hidden risks in financial and other fields cannot be ignored.

82. There are still many weak links in the area of the people's livelihood. The task of poverty alleviation is arduous, the agricultural and rural underpinnings are still weak, and the gaps between urban and rural regional development and income distribution remain large. Many sources of dissatisfaction persist for the general public with regard to such issues as air quality, environmental hygiene, food and drug safety, housing, education, medical care, employment and pensions. Serious industrial and other accidents happen from time to time, and the overall level of social civilization needs to be improved.

83. Social issues and problems are intertwined, and the task of comprehensively promoting law-based governance is still onerous. The systems and capacities of national governance need strengthening, and some reforms and major policy measures need to be pursued further. Deeper reform of the judicial system is still needed, the function of legal supervision has yet to be brought fully into play, judicial capacity at the grass-roots level needs further improvement, and some individual functionaries in the judiciary pervert the law for personal gain and damage judicial impartiality.

84. Some civil servants have a weak sense of service and the rule of law, a dishonest approach to their work, and an insufficient willingness to assume responsibility. Formalism and bureaucratism exist to varying degrees. Malpractice and corruption are still common in some areas, and the struggle against corruption is still grim and complicated. Human rights education for all has a long way to go.

B. Future goals

85. The overall goals for the future development of China were set out at the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 2017. China is implementing the five-sphere integrated plan to promote coordinated economic, political, cultural, social and ecological development, the four-pronged comprehensive strategy to make comprehensive moves to finish building a moderately prosperous society in all respects, deepen reform, advance law-based governance, and strengthen Party self-governance. Absolute poverty will be eliminated and a moderately well-off society comprehensively built by 2020, socialist modernization will be essentially realized by 2035, and the construction of a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and beautiful will be achieved by 2050. As these goals are gradually realized,

the cause of human rights in China will enjoy ever-higher levels of protection, resulting in comprehensive human development.

86. We will continue to put a new development vision into effect, modernize the economy and implement the strategies of rural revitalization and regional coordinated development. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development will be conscientiously implemented, the level of security raised and people's livelihoods improved, and the achievements of reform and development made broader and more equitable for the people as a whole. The development of education will be prioritized, the quality of employment and the level of income for the people will be raised, the construction of the social security system will be strengthened, victory in the battle against poverty will be resolutely pursued, and a healthy-China strategy will be implemented. By 2020, the gross domestic product and per capita income of urban and rural residents will be twice the levels of 2010; the impoverished rural population will be lifted out of poverty under the application of current standards; more than 50 million new urban jobs will be created during the 13th Five-Year Plan period; the average life expectancy will increase by one year; and the average length of education for the working-age population will reach 10.8 years.

87. We will solidify the system in which the country is run by the people, expand their orderly political participation, and ensure that the people implement democratic elections, consultation, decision-making, management and oversight in accordance with the law. The unity, dignity and authority of the State's legal system will be upheld, the protection of human rights and the rule of law will be strengthened and the people's enjoyment of extensive rights and freedoms in accordance with the law will be ensured. We will promote law-based governance and the integrated development of rule of law for the country, the Government and society. Strict standards for impartial and non-abusive law enforcement will be upheld, the supervision and management of law enforcement activities will be strengthened, citizens' personal and property rights and respect for their dignity will be upheld, the level of judicial impartiality will be raised and litigants' fair-trial rights will be ensured. The fight against corruption will be resolutely carried forward, without forbidden zones and with full coverage and zero tolerance. The popularization of, and training and education in, human rights awareness will be strengthened.

88. We will continue to accelerate the structural reform of ecological civilization and build a beautiful China. Green development will be carried forward, with a focus on solving emergent environmental problems, strengthening ecosystem protection and reforming the system for regulating the ecological environment.

89. We will accelerate the development of ethnic minorities and ethnic areas, strive to eliminate gender discrimination, strengthen the protection of the rights and interests of minors, actively respond to the ageing of the population, and improve the service system for assisting persons with disabilities. By 2020, the growth rate of major economic indicators in ethnic minority areas will be higher than the national average; the maternal mortality rate will be reduced to 18 per 100,000; mortality rates for infants and for children under 5 years of age will be held below 7.5 and 9.5 per 1,000 respectively; and old-age service facilities will cover more than 90 per cent of urban communities and 60 per cent of rural communities.

V. Promotion and protection of human rights in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

A. Methodology and public consultation

90. In preparing this part of the report, the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Hong Kong SAR) conducted public consultations from 3 April to 7 May 2018. The consultation documents of the Hong Kong SAR government were distributed among different social strata, including the Legislative Council, relevant non-governmental organizations, and Hong Kong citizens and media concerned about this issue, and were further disseminated through the Home Affairs Office and the Internet. During the

consultation period, the government of the Hong Kong SAR heard the views of representatives of non-governmental organizations via the Legislative Council and the Human Rights Forum. The government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region has carefully considered all the comments received.

B. Framework and measures for promoting and safeguarding human rights

91. The Hong Kong SAR is an inseparable part of China. It was established in accordance with the principle of "one country, two systems" under article 31 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China. Its system of governance is stipulated by the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China ("the Basic Law"). In the Hong Kong SAR, human rights are fully guaranteed under the provisions of the Basic Law, the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance (Cap. 383), anti-discrimination ordinances, data protection laws and other legislation. Courts of law carry out trials independently and can grant remedies for violations of the human rights-related provisions of the Basic Law and of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance. Since the submission of its previous report, the government of the Hong Kong SAR has strengthened the authority of some agencies to help promote and protect human rights. For example, the Equal Opportunities Commission has set up an ethnic-minorities affairs unit to promote equal opportunities and racial integration for ethnic minorities; the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data has launched a legal assistance scheme to assist data users intending to initiate legal procedures to seek compensation; and other public-sector entities have been brought under the remit of the Ombudsman. The government of the Hong Kong SAR continues to attach importance to the promotion of human rights through public education and publicity.

C. Achievements and challenges

92. The government of the Hong Kong SAR is striving to achieve the goal of having the Chief Executive and all members of the Legislative Council elected by universal suffrage, in accordance with the Basic Law and the relevant interpretations and decisions of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. In June 2015, after two rounds of extensive public consultation that lasted for a total of seven months, the government of the Hong Kong SAR proposed to the Legislative Council a scheme for election of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage. The relevant plans were drafted in accordance with the Basic Law and the decisions of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, with the opinions collected via public consultation also being taken into account. Regrettably, the motion did not receive the two-thirds majority of the full Council required for passage, and the 2017 election of the Chief Executive thus continued to follow the current election method (i.e. by vote of the 1,200-member Election Committee).

93. The government of the Hong Kong SAR understands the importance of electing the Chief Executive and the Legislative Council by universal suffrage, and likewise understands the public's appeals for this. It will do its best to create a social atmosphere conducive to the development of such a political system.

94. The fifth election for Chief Executive was held on 26 March 2017. At the end of the nomination period, three candidates had garnered valid nominations. Of the valid votes cast, Ms. Carrie Lam obtained more than half of the votes of the members of the Election Committee and was appointed by the State Council of the People's Republic of China as the fifth (2017–2022) Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. She was also the first female Chief Executive.

95. The Sixth Legislative Council comprises 70 members, chosen in an election held on 4 September 2016; the fifth District Council Election was held on 22 November 2015.

96. With regard to improving the people's livelihood, the government of the Hong Kong SAR is devoting more resources to helping the poor and vulnerable. In 2016, under the supervision of the Poverty Alleviation Commission and through effective policy

interventions, a recurrent cash benefits policy lifted 360,000 people out of poverty and reduced the poverty rate by 5.2 percentage points. The government of the Hong Kong SAR has introduced support measures for those in need, such as the Working Family Allowance scheme and the injection of HK$ 400 million into the Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged. In addition, the statutory minimum wage has been raised three times, from HK$ 28 per hour in 2011 to HK$ 34.5 per hour in 2017, exceeding the rate of inflation for the same period.

97. The Hong Kong Children's Commission was established on 1 June 2018 under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary for Administration, bringing together related policy bureaux/departments and groups concerned with children's rights and interests over the long term, to focus on the issues facing children as they grow. The Child Development Fund has received an additional capital injection of HK$ 300 million to support disadvantaged children. The first children's hospital in Hong Kong will open at the end of 2018 and will focus on treating complex and serious paediatric cases.

98. To strengthen the internal collaboration of the government of the Hong Kong SAR in support of ethnic minorities, the Chief Secretary for Administration will set up an inter-bureau steering committee in 2018 to coordinate, inspect and monitor implementation of the work involved in providing support to some 250,000 members of ethnic minorities in the Hong Kong SAR. The government has also set aside HK$ 500 million to strengthen support provided to ethnic minorities. In addition, to help non-Chinese-speaking students learn Chinese effectively, the government of the Hong Kong SAR will continue to monitor the progress of support measures in that regard and revise the details of their implementation as necessary. As the largest employer in Hong Kong, the government of the Hong Kong SAR also takes positive steps to ensure that the Chinese language proficiency requirements for civil servants at all levels are commensurate with their job requirements and that all applicants have equal access to government positions.

99. Faced with the challenges of an ageing population, the government of the Hong Kong SAR has launched a 10-year hospital development plan (adding 5,000 more beds), introduced a high subsistence allowance for the elderly in addition to various types of social security payments, and introduced employment support measures for elderly jobseekers.

100. The government of the Hong Kong SAR continues to promote equal opportunities for people of different sexual orientations and transgender persons, with a view to building a culture and values of social cohesion and mutual respect. It has taken such specific measures as setting up telephone hotlines, allocating training resources for specific categories of government personnel to enhance their sensitivity to sexual minorities, and introducing charters on non-discrimination against sexual minorities for voluntary adoption by employers. The Inter-departmental Working Group on Gender Recognition was established in 2014 to study legislation and administrative measures that may be necessary to protect the legal rights of transgender persons in Hong Kong. The working group, which conducted a public consultation in 2017, is now analysing the comments received and will report on the proposed course of work in the future.

101. Following a comprehensive review by the Equal Opportunities Commission of the four anti-discrimination ordinances, the government of the Hong Kong SAR decided to implement the eight recommendations of the Commission, including a prohibition of discrimination against breastfeeding women and the protection of service providers from harassment by service users on grounds of race or disability. Proposals for amendments to the laws will be submitted to the Legislative Council in 2018.

102. Since March 2014, the government of the Hong Kong SAR has implemented a unified screening mechanism to review non-refoulement applications submitted on all applicable grounds. Procedures for this unified review mechanism were developed along the lines of the statutory review mechanism for such applications submitted on the ground of torture, which came into effect in December 2012 and met a high standard of fairness, including the provision of legal aid at public expense to all applicants. Applicants who are dissatisfied with the decision of the Immigration Department may appeal to the independent Torture Claims Appeal Board.

103. With regard to employee rights and benefits, the Legislative Council passed a bill in May 2018 empowering the Labour Tribunal to order, without first obtaining the consent of employers, the reinstatement or re-employment of employees who have been unreasonably and illegally dismissed. The government of the Hong Kong SAR will also enact legislation to increase the number of days of statutory paternity leave from the current three days to five, and has begun a review process to improve statutory maternity leave. Foreign domestic helpers enjoy the same employment rights and protections as local employees under labour laws. The government of the Hong Kong SAR will not tolerate any acts of maltreatment or exploitation of foreign domestic helpers by employers or employment agencies. Another new law, which came into effect in February 2018, substantially increased the maximum penalty for the crimes of overcharging on commissions and conducting unlicensed business by employment agencies, thereby providing better protection for jobseekers, including foreign domestic helpers. In March 2018, a high-level inter-bureau/departmental steering committee chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration promulgated the Action Plan to Tackle Trafficking in Persons and to Enhance Protection of Foreign Domestic Helpers to guide the work of the government of the Hong Kong SAR in this regard.

104. The government of the Hong Kong SAR is committed to providing a safe, reliable, humane, suitable and healthy custody environment for prisoners, and to assisting them in their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. In order to enhance the independence and transparency of the complaint handling mechanism, the Correctional Services Department set up the Complaints Appeal Board in 2016 to provide appeal channels for complainants who feel aggrieved.

105. The government of the Hong Kong SAR continues to respect the right of citizens to peaceful assembly and procession. Between 2012 and 2017, more than 50,000 public meetings and demonstrations were held in Hong Kong, most of which were conducted in a peaceful and orderly manner in accordance with the law.

106. The citizens of Hong Kong continue to enjoy freedom of expression and freedom of the press. The government of the Hong Kong SAR has continuously created an appropriate environment in which the press can flourish freely, and will not interfere in the internal operations of the media. In 2017, a new arrangement was introduced to allow access to government-sponsored press conferences and media events for representatives of qualified Internet-only media.

107. Improving people's livelihoods, meeting the needs of the public and building a liveable city are the major challenges facing the Hong Kong SAR. The Region will be prepared to seize the opportunities presented by two major national policies: the Belt and Road Initiative and the development of the "Guangdong–Hong Kong–Macao Greater Bay Area". The development of innovative technology will also help foster new industries and create excellent job opportunities for young people.

VI. Promotion and protection of human rights in the Macao Special Administrative Region

A. Methodology and consultation process

108. The present report has been compiled on the basis of information provided by relevant departments and entities of the Macao Special Administrative Region (Macao SAR) and through online public consultation. The Macao SAR makes the reports on its implementation of human rights conventions, and the reports submitted to the Human Rights Council, broadly available through the government's portal website and the website of the Legal Affairs Bureau.

B. Legislative and institutional framework for the promotion and protection of human rights

109. The political status and institutional framework of the Macao SAR have been elaborated upon in detail in core Chinese documents and previous reports. The Macao SAR exercises a high degree of autonomy and enjoys executive, legislative, independent judicial and final-adjudication powers, while the Central People's Government of China is responsible for the management of defence and foreign affairs relating to the Macao SAR. At the same time, the government of the Macao SAR, with the authorization of the Central People's Government, may handle relevant foreign affairs on its own in accordance with article 13, paragraph 3, of the Basic Law of the Macao SAR.

110. At the constitutional level, the legal framework for human rights in the Macao SAR is capped by the Basic Law at the top of the legal hierarchy, and entails the application of the related treaties (the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment), as well as the protections provided under the general law. The protection of the rights and freedoms of Macao SAR residents is one of the universal principles enshrined in the Basic Law (articles 4 and 11), and is further stipulated in the general law.

111. The legal system of the Macao SAR guarantees that all persons within or subject to its jurisdiction are equal before the law and may not be discriminated against for any reason. This principle derives from different legal sources and is enshrined in articles 25 and 43 of the Basic Law, as well as at various other normative levels. The core fundamental rights and freedoms enjoyed by local and non-local residents are set out in chapter III of the Basic Law (articles 24 to 44). Apart from positive discrimination as a necessary measure to redress de facto injustice, discrimination is absolutely inadmissible under the law (article 38). Except in accordance with the law, no restrictions may be imposed on rights and freedoms (article 40).

112. The Macao SAR has a wide range of ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural communities living harmoniously with each other. Tolerance and respect for cultural diversity have always been the cornerstone of the Macao SAR way of life. Each ethnic group enjoys equal dignity and the right to enjoy its own cultural life, embrace its own religion and use its own language.

113. The participation of civil society groups in community life is one of the characteristics of the Macao SAR. The involvement of such associations in human rights-related government committees helps to promote relevant policies, promote and protect human rights, ensure transparency in the allocation of resources and the quality of services, and promote direct social participation in government affairs.

C. Progress in promoting and protecting human rights

114. The Macao SAR has made progress in various areas of human rights, particularly at the legislative level. New laws have been enacted, including legislation to prevent and combat domestic violence, define sexual harassment and child pornography as independent crimes, expand the definition of the crime of child prostitution, protect cultural heritage, regulate higher education, improve low-cost housing, strengthen food safety, establish a labour creditor's rights protection system, prevent and control environmental noise, revise the electoral system, improve labour relations and working conditions of expatriate employees, strengthen smoking prevention, strengthen the fight against the consumption and trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and prevent communicable diseases. At present, the Legislative Assembly is considering bills on legal systems for protecting the rights and interests of the elderly and for affordable public housing, and on tax preferences for the employment of persons with disabilities.

115. In this regard, the mechanism formulated in 2011 for consultation on public policies and draft laws is an important tool for residents to participate in public affairs. Topics for such consultations have included the Publishing Law (2013), the legal system for the protection of consumer rights and interests (2014), the Macao Criminal Code, the special education system, the Ten-Year Plan of Action for Services to the Elderly, and the pension security mechanism (2015), the Legislative Assembly Election Law and the Ten-Year Plan for Rehabilitation Services (2016), setting up non-governmental municipal organizations, the Cybersecurity Law, and medically assisted reproductive technology (2017), and the Plan for Protection and Management of Historic Urban Areas of Macao (2018).

116. The government of the Macao SAR is also endeavouring to promote and guarantee the bilingual judicial system by increasing the number of professionally trained judicial personnel, thereby safeguarding the basic right of access to justice.

117. The government of the Macao SAR has continued to organize publicity campaigns and specialized training courses to promote human rights among government personnel, judicial personnel, teaching staff and different communities, and, through education, especially through teaching and promotional activities, has taken substantive and effective measures to promote equality and other basic rights stipulated under the Basic Law and human rights instruments applied in Macao. In this regard, the government pays special attention to adolescents by raising their awareness of gender equality, non-discrimination and other basic rights through school curricula and the establishment of the Law Popularization Centre for Youth in 2015. The Macao Youth Policy 2012–2020 also ensures youth participation in social and public affairs and safeguards equal opportunities.

118. In fact, the government of the Macao SAR has made efforts to broadly and comprehensively promote and raise awareness of human rights and related laws through new kinds of approaches and actions, including the use of new technologies and promotional activities in Chinese, Portuguese (the two official languages) and other languages, especially English.

119. The Macao SAR is strengthening its oversight and protection of the rights of expatriate employees to keep them free from abuse and exploitation. The Labour Affairs Bureau has adopted a variety of strategies, using different languages, to enhance employees' awareness of labour laws and of their own rights, and to develop harmonious labour relations.

120. The government of the Macao SAR has adopted a cross-cutting and comprehensive approach to domestic violence at the legal (public offences), institutional (cross-border cooperation mechanisms) and practical levels, and has taken various measures to assist victims, such as resettlement, economic and judicial assistance, health care, schooling, employment, individual or family counselling, and services through the Family Crisis Support Services Network. It has also established a notification mechanism requiring public and private entities providing services for children, women, the elderly or persons with disabilities to report domestic violence.

121. The government of the Macao SAR has drafted the Ten-Year Plan of Action for Services to the Elderly from 2016 to 2025 and the Ten-Year Plan for Rehabilitation Services from 2016 to 2025, respectively, and has set up an interdepartmental steering group to implement short-, medium- and long-term policies and measures in an orderly manner, so as to promote the quality of life of the elderly and help persons with disabilities integrate into society. In the area of drug abuse prevention, a healthy-life education park was set up in 2016 to promote healthy lifestyles, focusing on teaching children how to lead healthy lives.

122. The government of the Macao SAR is continuing to combat trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances (under Law No. 17/2009 as amended in 2016), corruption (Law No. 10/2014, System for Preventing and Suppressing Bribery in Foreign Trade), and trafficking in persons. The Human Trafficking Deterrent Measures Concern Committee continues to coordinate the work of many government departments in preventing and combating trafficking in persons, and devotes significant resources to educational and promotional undertakings; related illegal activities have been effectively

curbed as a result, and the reduced incidence of such cases has garnered the recognition of all sectors of society.

123. Cultural diversity is one of the main features of the Macao SAR. The historic centre of Macao was included on the World Cultural Heritage List of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in 2005; that organization's official designation of Macao as a "Creative City of Gastronomy" in 2017 was another important milestone. Law No. 11/2013 on Cultural Heritage Preservation protects and promotes the material and intangible cultural heritage of Macao, and establishes a Cultural Heritage Committee composed of government officials and public figures of recognized ability.

D. Future objectives and challenges

124. The government of the Macao SAR is currently formulating the Macao Women's Development Goals, which will focus on seven areas: education and training, health care, security, social welfare, economy, participation in power and decision-making, and media and culture. An interdepartmental working group will be formed to discuss and coordinate specific programmes and policy measures to strengthen gender equality and women's development in society.

125. The government of the Macao SAR attaches great importance to environmental protection, and has been taking innovative and progressive measures to reduce carbon emissions and control increases in the number of vehicles (slogan: "Build a low-carbon Macao and create a green life together"). Deepening environmental education and advocating sustainable practices and a green society are priority projects. The Paris Agreement and the Minamata Convention on Mercury have been applicable in the Macao SAR since 2016 and 2017 respectively. In 2017, the government promulgated the Macao Solid Waste Resource Management Plan (2017–2026).

126. With regard to disaster prevention and civil defence, the government reviewed the current legal system for civil defence immediately after Typhoon Hato in 2017, and completed the drafting of the Civil Defence Framework Law, along with a framework for establishing a Civil Defence and Emergency Coordination Bureau, in February 2018. The aforementioned Bureau will be fully responsible for civil defence and emergency coordination. The government of the Macao SAR is now at work on the Ten-Year Plan for Disaster Prevention and Mitigation in Macao (2019–2028). It plans to build a new office building for the Civil Defence and Emergency Operations Centre on the Macao Peninsula, strengthen the software and hardware of the unified command centre, build a dedicated emergency-rescue team, and deepen the development of human resources for disaster prevention, as well as emergency-response capacity and risk assessment.